



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Fillmore Field Office

95 E 500 N

Fillmore, UT 84631

<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/fillmore.html>



IN REPLY REFER TO:
2800, 2880, 3500, 3590
(UTW02000)

July 17, 2015

Dear Interested Party,

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fillmore Field Office intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose impacts associated with the Sevier Playa Project (Project), a proposed potash mine located on public land in central Millard County, Utah. The BLM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the EIS in the *Federal Register* on March 12, 2014 to announce the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

The applicant, Peak Minerals Inc. (Peak Minerals), has requested to construct an operational potash mine on mineral leases, located on BLM public land and State land, which they hold the right to develop. In addition, Peak Minerals has submitted a right-of-way (ROW) application to the BLM for off-lease supporting facilities (i.e., power lines, communication towers, water supply and distribution, natural gas pipeline, access roads, and railroad facilities). Peak Minerals is proposing to construct, operate, and maintain the Project which would include facilities to extract and process potash from the brine solution found in the leased area. Potash is defined by regulation under 43 CFR Part 3500 and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as a solid leasable mineral.

The Sevier Playa leased area is located in southwestern Utah in the central portion of Millard County, and is defined generally by the geographical boundaries of the Sevier Lake Playa (see attached map). Peak Minerals controls directly, or through agreement, the BLM mineral leases on more than 124,000 acres. Potash leases grant the lessee the exclusive right and privilege to explore for, drill for, mine, extract, remove, beneficiate, concentrate, or otherwise process and dispose of the potassium deposits and other associated minerals. The leased lands for the proposed Project are predominantly administered by the BLM, with isolated 640-acre State sections managed by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). The proposed Project would be designed to produce 300,000 tons of potash per year in the form of K_2SO_4 or sulphate of potash (SOP) over an anticipated minimum project life of 30 years.

An operating plan for mining (Mining Plan) has been prepared by Peak Minerals and describes the Project in detail. Brine would be extracted from beneath the playa surface by extraction

READING FILE

trenches and wells. Enhanced aquifer recharge would be implemented to support the hydraulic head necessary to maintain target extraction rates. Extracted brine would be transferred to concentration ponds to concentrate and precipitate the resource through solar evaporation. Potash salts would be harvested, stockpiled, crushed, and processed.

The Project facilities would include ponds, wells, a processing facility, power line, substation, gas line, rail facility, freshwater well, and access roads. The Project site would be accessed via state highways on the north and east sides. To the extent possible, existing roads would be used for access for construction and maintenance.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EIS. At present, the BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: Air quality, water quality, traffic and usage of secondary roads, on-site and compensatory mitigation, and wildlife concerns.

A public scoping meeting will be held to solicit comments between 4:00 to 7:00 pm on August 5, 2015 at the Millard School District Board Room located at 285 East 450 North in Delta, Utah.

You may submit comments related to the Sevier Playa Project by any of the following methods:

- In person at the scoping meeting
- Email: blm_ut_fm_comments@blm.gov
- Fax: 435-743-3135
- Mail: BLM, Fillmore Field Office, 95 East 500 North, Fillmore, UT 84631

The BLM welcomes comments and requires that all submissions be written and as specific as possible. A comment form attached to this letter may be used. In order to be considered in the Draft EIS, all comments must be received prior to August 31, 2015. Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM Fillmore Field Office.

For further information or to add a name to our mailing list, contact Cindy Ledbetter, Environmental Coordinator, BLM, 95 East 500 North, Fillmore, UT 84631 or telephone 435-743-3127 or email blm_ut_fm_comments@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael D. Gates

Michael D. Gates
Field Manager

Enclosure:

Map - Sevier Playa Project Overview

CStevens:bh